

RESPONSIBLE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: THE MARCELLUS SHALE

<http://joehoffel2010.com/environment/marcellus-shale>

The extraction of Marcellus Shale natural gas represents an entirely new economy for Pennsylvania. It has the potential to create thousands of jobs, drive local economies, and build revenue for the commonwealth. **Drilling in the Marcellus Shale also opens up new environmental concerns** with extremely serious consequences for all Pennsylvanians.

Joe Hoeffel will fight for responsible gas drilling with strong environmental regulations. Currently, the gas companies are exempt from many federal water safety restrictions. **Joe will keep Pennsylvania safe while allowing us to prosper from this resource for decades to come.**

DRILLING DEEP FOR NATURAL GAS

Pennsylvania sits above a treasure trove of natural gas: a layer of rock called the Marcellus Shale a mile underneath two-thirds of the commonwealth. The Marcellus Shale contains what may be the largest natural gas reserve in the United States.

To drill a Marcellus Shale well, millions of gallons of water (taken from a local stream, river, or lake) are forced down into the shale to fracture it and allow the gas contained within to come to the

surface: this is called hydraulic fracturing. To aid the process, dozens of chemicals (including arsenic, benzene, and pesticides) are added to the water. Most of the water returns to the surface as industrial wastewater. **Each well produces millions of gallons of chemical-laced wastewater.**

In 2008 and 2009, over 1,000 wells were drilled and began operation in Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale. Over 2,000 drilling permits were issued by the end of 2009. The Department of Environmental Protection estimates another 5,200 drilling permits will be issued in 2010.

OUR DRINKING WATER IS AT STAKE

The natural gas industry is not currently responsible for treating this wastewater: since 2005 it has been exempt from the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. Pennsylvania has wastewater treatment regulations, enforced by the Department of Environmental Protection, but Pennsylvania's regulations don't cover most of the chemicals in Marcellus Shale wastewater.

The drinking water supply of the entire commonwealth is at risk of contamination.

With no requirement to treat the wastewater, the natural gas industry can simply deliver it to municipal water treatment facilities. The industry is allowed to create a mess and isn't held responsible for cleaning it up. That's something Pennsylvania allowed the coal industry to get away with for decades, and we're still suffering the consequences. We can't let that happen again.

Municipal facilities aren't equipped to remove the chemicals in industrial wastewater. Municipalities will be hard-pressed to afford expensive new treatment plants capable of adequate treatment.

REGULATIONS TO PROTECT OUR WATER

Pennsylvania needs stronger wastewater treatment regulations which establish limits on the amount of total dissolved solids and toxic chemicals, to comply with Safe Drinking Water Act standards.

Joe Hoeffel will continue to call upon the DEP to strengthen its regulations to adequately protect the drinking water of our commonwealth. He has already delivered testimony to the DEP at a hearing in Allentown and spoken at a forum on natural gas drilling chaired by State Representative Vitali.

Joe is working with environmental organizations and advisors from universities to understand the science of water safety. He's also visiting communities around the commonwealth to learn about the effects of drilling from local residents.

A SEVERANCE TAX TO MEET OUR NEEDS

Pennsylvania must require natural gas companies to pay a severance tax on the gas they mine. **Pennsylvania is the only major natural-gas-producing state without a severance tax.** The silver lining is that we can learn from other states and create a fair tax with maximum benefits.

The industry is extraordinarily profitable and Pennsylvania's natural gas supply is enormous. Pennsylvania must stand firm and enact a tax that will meet the costs the industry places on the state. **Joe Hoeffel will make sure Pennsylvania gets a fair deal from the natural gas companies.**

Joe will seek a severance tax which will double the projected revenue from Governor Rendell's currently proposed tax to provide Pennsylvania with \$300 million in its first year.

The tax has to be used wisely. **A severance tax won't last forever: once the gas is gone, the tax revenue ends.** Pennsylvania must devote some of the severance tax money to protecting the towns experiencing a boom economy during the gas rush from experiencing a bust economy later.

Joe Hoeffel will dedicate portions of the severance tax to fund:

- **DEP's inspection and enforcement operations;**
- **new wastewater treatment facilities;**
- **the renewal of Growing Greener;**
- **communities affected by drilling** in their efforts to meet the infrastructure and housing costs the industry has brought them; and
- **our community colleges,** expanding programs and educational sites to build a strong, adaptable workforce throughout the state.

Bolstering our community colleges will help prepare Pennsylvanians for thousands of skilled jobs today in the natural gas industry and environmental protection. Community colleges will also prepare our workforce for jobs in green energy, manufacturing, infrastructure, technology, health care, and other fields which will long outlast the Marcellus Shale natural gas.

Joe Hoeffel will make sure Pennsylvanians are prepared to take the jobs the industry creates.

A MORATORIUM ON NEW PERMITS

The Department of Environmental Protection has estimated the number of Marcellus Shale permits issued will triple in 2010. The DEP is already overwhelmed and unable to meet its current obligations. Our regulations are not adequately protecting our drinking water, and we lack the facilities and funding to provide this treatment. It's time to slow down and do things in the right order.

Joe Hoeffel supports a moratorium on issuing new drilling permits until the new wastewater regulations are in place and enforceable.

Joe also supports a moratorium on the leasing of additional state lands for drilling until a comprehensive study of all state land is performed to prioritize which land is most critical to protect.

WHAT LIES AHEAD, IF WE DON'T ACT

Already, we have seen disasters which have resulted from a lack of careful management, oversight, and protection. Leasing mineral rights and receiving royalty payments is extremely attractive to many landowners, but once drilling begins, the picture often changes.

A Washington County resident tested his water a year before the drillers came and again after they drilled three wells on his property. He discovered **arsenic at 2,600 times acceptable levels, benzene at 44 times above limits, and naphthalene five times the federal standard.**

He now says, "I don't want to live here any more. I'm afraid of the chemicals."¹

In the Susquehanna County town of Dimock, tests have showed drinking water now contains **high quantities of aluminum, iron, and methane.**

Methane from natural gas drilling leaked into groundwater caused **a drinking water well to explode** and another well to catch fire; wells were found to contain so much toxic gas that residents were told to open windows for ventilation when bathing.

"The smell and rotten taste, you couldn't take a shower in it because the smell stayed on your skin, you couldn't wash clothes in it," said one Dimock resident of the town's water.

Another Dimock resident has contemplated selling her house and moving. "How would you advertise it?" she asks. **"Beautiful house in the country. Bring your own water."**²

WHAT LIES AHEAD, IF WE ACT WISELY

Pennsylvania can benefit tremendously from the natural gas reserves of the Marcellus Shale with careful planning.

With environmental regulations that protect our water statewide, a severance tax which allows our towns to adapt to their new industry, and a plan in place to protect our state land, **Pennsylvania can take pride in its natural gas industry.** Landowners, towns, and the commonwealth will prosper. Many Pennsylvanians will be employed working on gas wells and in treatment facilities. And most importantly, Pennsylvania will be prepared for the day the drilling ends. If we prepare, the boom won't turn into a bust.

Joe Hoeffel will fight for the crucial policies which will maximize the benefits to Pennsylvania from our Marcellus Shale resources without compromising the safety and beauty of the commonwealth.

¹ "Pennsylvania lawsuit says drilling polluted water." Environmental Compliance Monitor. <http://tinyurl.com/y89xkup>

² "Environmental concerns rise in northeastern Pennsylvania as natural gas drilling spreads." Voice of America. <http://tinyurl.com/ycp9ulo>